

CLAIMS

1. A method, comprising:
 - locating a plurality of devices connected to a fabric;
 - collecting capability information for each device;
 - updating a capability table with said capability information; and
 - configuring each device with fabric information.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting comprises collecting capability information for a plurality of devices in parallel.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting comprises:
 - determining whether capability information for a device has already been collected; and
 - collecting capability information for said device in accordance with said determination.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein capability information for said device has not been collected, and said collecting comprises:
 - reading a set of capabilities for said device;
 - determining whether there are any reference tables associated with said capabilities; and
 - reading said reference tables.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - detecting that all of said capabilities for said device have been read;
 - determining whether said device connects to any other devices; and
 - reading a set of capabilities and associated reference tables for said other devices if said device connects to said other devices.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said configuring comprises configuring at least one capability with said fabric information.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - detecting that capabilities information has been read for all devices connected to said fabric;
 - creating a connection table for said plurality of devices; and
 - communicating information between said devices using said fabric and said connection table.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting and configuring is performed using protocol interface packets as defined by an Advanced Switching Specification.
9. A system, comprising:
 - a plurality of devices;

a communications fabric to connect to said plurality of devices, said communications fabric to communicate information between said devices;

 a fabric management module to connect to said communications fabric, said fabric management module to discover and configure said devices to communicate said information using said communications fabric; and

 a shelf for said plurality of devices, communications fabric, and fabric management module.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein at least one device comprises a single board computer.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein said communications fabric is arranged in accordance with an Advanced Switching Specification.

12. The system of claim 9, wherein said fabric management module comprises a fabric discovery module to locate said plurality of devices connected to said communications fabric, said fabric discovery module to collect a set of capability information for each device, and to configure each device with fabric information.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein said fabric management module comprises a capability database connected to fabric discovery module, said capability database to store a record for each device.

14. An apparatus, comprising:
 - a plurality of devices;
 - a communications fabric to connect to said plurality of devices, said communications fabric to communicate information between said devices; and
 - a fabric management module to connect to said communications fabric, said fabric management module to discover and configure said devices to communicate said information using said communications fabric.
15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein at least one device comprises a single board computer.
16. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said communications fabric is arranged in accordance with an Advanced Switching Specification.
17. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said fabric management module comprises a fabric discovery module to locate said plurality of devices connected to said communications fabric, said fabric discovery module to collect a set of capability information for each device, and to configure each device with fabric information.
18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said fabric management module comprises a capability database connected to said fabric discovery module, said capability database to store a record for each device.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said fabric discovery module generates a connection table for said plurality of devices, with said connection table having a path between each pair of devices connected to said communications fabric.

20. An article comprising:

 a storage medium;
 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a processor, are operable to locate a plurality of devices connected to a fabric, collect capability information for each device, update a capability table with said capability information, and configure each device with fabric information.

21. The article of claim 20, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, are further operable to collect said capability information for a plurality of devices in parallel.

22. The article of claim 20, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, collect said capability information using stored instructions operable to determine whether capability information for a device has already been collected, and collect capability information for said device in accordance with said determination.

23. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, determine that said capability information for said device has not been collected, and collect said capability information using stored instructions operable to

read a set of capabilities for said device, determine whether there are any reference tables associated with said capabilities, and read said reference tables.

24. The article of claim 23, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, are further operable to detect that all of said capabilities for said device have been read, determine whether said device connects to any other devices, and read a set of capabilities and associated reference tables for said other devices if said device connects to said other devices.